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distressed Jerusalem, and addressing to her his most precious and solemn promises, speaks to her in such words as these: "Oh, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted. (What shall be done to her? What brightest emblem of blessing will God set before her?) "Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." O.

### LOVE.\*

WE never supposed that in these days of railroads, steamboats, Atlantic telegraphs, sewing machines, stock gambling, and of every other instrument of trading craft, and money-making ingenuity, that a man—over sixty years of age—would deliberately sit down to write a book on the all but mythical subject of love. If this man were not M. Michelet, the historian, we should look upon the volume before us as the ingenious and playful work of a mythographer. An examination of the book itself, however, has satisfied us that the author is the creature of his age, a mere cork upon its drunken current; for, instead of writing a book upon love properly understood, he has written one on marriage, and labelled it with the fascinating title of Love. In this respect he has the commercial tact of the times—of never labelling a thing to be what it really is.

It is very dangerous, at any social period of the world, for an old man to pretend to write on love, except by way of giving a reflected summary of his own past personal experiences. We seldom find the frosty face of December made eloquent by the young blooming flowers of June, nor an old mind willing or capable of suitably writing about the sweet vagaries and primrose excursions of a young and sensitive heart. It is something pleasant enough to think silently upon the history of our own affections, whether it be one of ruin or prosperity, but never to write and publish it to the world. Kindred spirits are too few and far between in life to convert the sacred interior of our souls into a public looking-glass, or to let the sacred fires of our own affections burst forth upon those whose icy natures are doomed to eternal congelment.

If M. Michelet had the capacity to write a book on love, he would have had the wise instinct of not publishing it in these days, for though the god of love is painted blind, yet his sight becomes very good when he begins to write. Our author is careful, however, to veil his own love-history, if he ever had any, and to study a selfish personal reservation by talking about the many important revelations with which he has been favored by others, including even some of his medical friends. It is by this literary juggle that he eludes all morbid curiosity as to his own individual case, and with the cunning skill of an adroit novelist, gratifies the public with the secrets of others rather than with his own. This would seem to be the trick of a man accustomed to serve up commercially literary nos-

trums, in order to meet the vicious demand of a jaded, idle and gluttonous reading public. It is the curse of the day, that if a writer would be popular, or would have pay for his labor, he must be ambidextrous, and hold out all the hollow allurements characteristic of the venders of quack or patent medicines. If M. Michelet had written an earnest, a spiritual, a poetically lofty treatise on love, as an honest, exalted, and humanizing impulse of our nature, we should have received it gratefully and reverentially as the matured fruit of a mind beautifully green in its old age—we should have cordially commended it to the youth of our day for their perusal and meditation. But seeing this is not the case, and that instead of a book on love he has given us one on what may be called the physiology of marriage, popularly, sometimes mystically, written, we would rather see it read by the fathers and mothers of our day than by their sons and daughters. To the former, the work might be more instructive than injurious; to the latter, it would be infinitely more injurious than instructive. In saying this, we by no means accuse M. Michelet of an immoral purpose, but rather of having erred through defect of judgment—through vanity and a desire to say startling things in a phraseology full of affected peculiarities.

The brain of M. Michelet would never seem to have been the nursery of much original or reliable thought, and would never seem to have been able to give to the wandering theories of the day a local habitation and a name. In history he has given to the thoughts of others not so much an extension as a new and taking dress. In his late works we have many pearls, but no visible thread upon which to hang them; we have fine writing, but no serious or earnest thinking. His critics flounder in trying to pierce, to account for his strange, incoherent, and erratic utterances, and in seeking to flash light upon his darkness they become blind themselves. In this book on love, we have curiously confounded together the flashy style and dropsical thoughts of the youth of seventeen, the sharpness of observation and the shrewdness of reflection of the accomplished man of the world, and the recondite results of much and varied scientific reading. His Anglo-Saxon critics are dumfounded in the presence of this medley; their automatic brains swoon away before the brilliant coruscations of such a literary kaleidoscope. In this corybantic state of mind they can only exclaim that the author is a Frenchman, and that his work has been written for a French public, as if human nature in France had some dark and inexplicable protuberances by which we can account for everything, even the riddles of the sphinx. The book of M. Michelet, however, is not less an enigma to English critics than the melancholy case of their own Walter Savage Landor. When the latter shall emerge from the pillars of smoke which his literary countrymen have amassed around him, we shall begin to hope for a better understanding of M. Michelet in the region of the Thames.

In the human family, without reference to national or artificial distinctions, we have very great diversities of mental or-

\* L'Amour, by M. Michelet. Paris, 1859.

ganization which lead to equally great diversities in the manifestation of thought. In the absence of anything like an enlightened classification of minds, as exhibited through their productions, we have no reliable criticism to guide us in the true estimation of authors and their works. Judgments are as multiple and discordant as the individuals from whom they proceed, and equally as arbitrary; and insuperable difficulties stand in the way of establishing a critical concordance between French, German, and English thought and feeling. That criticism which does not aim at the discovery of fundamental unity amongst the diversity of national, individual, and ethnological thought, has no real value in the economy of human effort, and serves but to distract and lead astray the already too aberrant intellect of our day. Of the leading national minds of Europe, that of England is the most decidedly insular, and in this way the most open to the charge of insularity. English authors copy and imitate those of the continent, but they rarely estimate them justly in the criticisms which they write for their own people. Their commercial habits lead them to see no value in any merchandise but their own, a weakness due to trading communities generally.

M. Michelet mourns over the decrease of marriages, and over the misfortune of women marrying late in life. In Paris, where women have an early maturity, they seldom marry before the age of twenty-five. In this, M. Michelet sees nothing but long years of expectation, of misery and of forced irregularities. Where women are left to pine away in unmarried loneliness, men are generally polygamists—that is, they viciously float through life without any moral obligations, and owe no legitimate allegiance to society. The races of men, as seen in history, owe their moral and physical vigor to their monogamic life; and in natural history we see the higher animals prone to conjugal life, and attain it, at least for a time; it is on this account that they are superior.

It is said that love amongst animals is changing and variable; that mobility in pleasure is for them the natural state. We see, however, that from the moment there is some stability possible, some regular means of living, there is formed amongst them marriages, at least temporary, created not only out of love for their brood, but really due to love itself. "I have," says M. Michelet, "repeatedly noticed this, particularly in Switzerland, in the case of a family of chaffinches. The female having perished, the male fell into despair, and allowed their offspring to perish. It was evidently love, and not paternal love, which had confined him to his nest. His mate died, and all was over."

As we have, even on this side of the Atlantic, a good many itinerant husbands and wives, and even lovers, over fond of variety—that is, of hopping from one fair one to another, we would advise them to ponder over this paragraph from M. Michelet's volume:

"Love begets love, and increases it. The secret of people liking each other very much is owing to their being

greatly occupied, the one with the other—of being very much together, and as near one another as they possibly can be."

When married people, in the old town of Zurich, get into angry disputes, and seek to be divorced, the magistrate pays no attention to them. Before yielding to their demands, he orders them to be confined for three days in a single chamber, having one bed, a table, a plate, and a glass. They receive nourishment without anybody seeing or speaking to them. In leaving this chamber, at the end of three days, no divorce is asked for or required by them. We would advise the wise law-makers of this great Union to adopt a similar course, and thereby conform themselves more literally to the precepts of the Bible, as there is no use in prating so much about this book unless we pay attention to its teachings.

Marriage in antiquity, according to M. Michelet, was corporeal, a matter of flesh and blood; in modern times it is a union of souls in which the soul is an important constituent. Ah! M. Michelet, we grant, it *ought* to be so, but is it? By your own admissions, it is far from being so in France, and we know that it is far from being so in this country. In these days of buying and selling, of commercial sharpness and cunning trading, what chance is there for the culture of the heart? Are not its deepest fountains dried up by the exhausting draughts made on it by the parched and withered brain of our times? Do not men's heads diminish in their rotundity, and take the shape of an iron wedge? Is there not a kind of social piracy substituted for the straightforward impulses of untainted hearts? Is not the union of hearts a folly—the union of fat purses wisdom? Is there anything really thought of, talked of, dreamed of, but money—the *modern basis* of the individual, of the family, of society? In romances, in poetry, love may appear like a lone star in northern skies, but it has been inhospitably driven from our hearts by the onward moving, material currents of our hard, calculating, and huckstering times.

I do not approve of the maxim which states that a *sound man should know a little of everything*. Almost always useless and sometimes pernicious, is it to know superficially and without principles. It is true that a majority of men are scarcely capable of going to the bottom of things, but it is also true that the small knowledge which they acquire, does not gratify their vanity. It injures the possessors of true genius, for it diverts them from healthy aspiration, consumes time upon minutiae and upon subjects alien to their wants, and not adapted to the exercise of their natural talent; and, finally, it does not serve, as some flatter themselves, to demonstrate a commanding grace of intellect. In all times there have been men who knew a great deal with very mediocre minds, and, on the contrary, very great minds with very little knowledge. Ignorance is no sign of a defective mind, and knowledge is no proof of genius.—*Vauvenargues*.

THE ideal is the mysterious ladder that enables the soul to ascend from the finite to the infinite.—*Courten*.